Thomson Granted Immunity in Probe Of Alleged Bribes

By John M. Goshko
and Timothy S. Robinson
Washington Post Staff Writers

Suzi Park Thomson, a Korean-born aide to House Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.), yesterday was granted immunity to testify before federal grand jury probing allegations that House members accepted bribes from the South Korean government.

At least two members of Congress—Reps. Robert L. Leggett (D-Calif.) and Joseph P. Addabbo (D-N.Y.)—are known to be subjects of a seven-month Justice Department investigation of the bribery allegations.

Thomson, a clerk on Albert's staff since 1971, also is known to be a central figure in the inquiry. Justice Department investigators are understood to be interested in her role as a prominent Capitol Hill hostess, whose parties served to bring members of Congress together with representatives of President Park Chung Hee's Seoul regime.

leggett and Addabbo have acknowledged they are friends of Thomson. Both have denied any wrongdoing in connection with the bribery allegations.

Sources familiar with the investigation said Thomson was given immunity from prosecution by Chief Judge William B. Jones of the U.S. District Court here at a meeting yesterday in the judge's chambers.

The effect of the immunity is to protect Thomson from incriminating herself through testimony that she gives to the District Court grand jury considering the case. If she now refuses to answer the grand jury's questions, she could be charged with contempt.

The sources said Jones acted at the request of attorneys from the Justice Department's public integrity section, which is in charge of the probe. The section is a special unit that was set up in the department's criminal division early this year to investigate allegations of wrongdoing by federal officials.

Thomson, a naturalized U.S. citizen, is a divorcee whose maiden name was Sook Nai Park. She is a 1959 graduate of the University of South Carolina with a degree in political science.

SUZI PARK THOMSON
. . . $15,000 clerk to Speaker Albert

She is the daughter of Choong Han Park, a former South Korean national assemblyman and provincial governor who now lives in Los Angeles.

She has been listed as a $15,000-a-kear employee on Albert's staff.

Beth McNeill, Albert's assistant press secretary, said yesterday that Thomson's work in the Speaker's office was "purely secretarial" and described it as "typing and the preparation of form letters and drafts of letters."

In an interview with The Washington Post last year, Thomson described herself as Albert's "liaison" with House members. He chose her, she said, because she "knew more people and had more firends than anyone around.

In Capitol Hill circles, she was well-known as a giver of elegant and frequently lavish parties—some of them dinner parties where she would cook oriental specialties and some larger affairs with wide-ranging guest lists of members of Congress, congressional aides, lobbyists and diplomats.

Among those frequently in attendance at her parties were several persons known to be associated with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. These included Yung Hwan Kim, a former Korean air force general listed on diplomatic rolls as a minister at the South Korean embassy here but widely identified in intelligence circles as the KCIA chief in the United States.

Leggett and Addabbo have confirmed that they became acquainted with Kim through Thomson's parties. Addabbo also said that Thomson had hosted his birthday celebrations in the past, but said he paid for the food and liquor at these parties.